

*A Conversation with
Francis & Judith
MacNutt*

Dr. David Kyle Foster

A Conversation with Francis & Judith MacNutt
(Founders & Directors of Christian Healing Ministries)

by David K. Foster

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Contents

[Biography of Francis MacNutt](#)

[Biography of Judith MacNutt](#)

[The Interview](#)

[Celebrating the Life of Dr. Francis MacNutt](#)

[Francis' Books](#)

[Judith's Books](#)

[About the Author](#)

[Ministry Links](#)

[Additional Ministry Links](#)

Biography of Francis MacNutt

Born 1925, Francis MacNutt grew up in St. Louis, Missouri and had hoped to become a physician after finishing college and medical school. However, ten days before entering Washington University Medical School, he was drafted into the Army, where he served as a surgical technician during World War II.

Following military service, Francis returned to college on the GI Bill. He graduated from Harvard University with honors and then earned an M.F.A. from Catholic University of America (in the Speech Department). At Catholic University, Francis was profoundly affected when he read Thomas Merton's *Seven Storey Mountain*. Francis' father was a deeply religious man who instilled in his son a sincere love and reverence for the Church. Francis' life took a new direction when, at Catholic University, he felt drawn to the priesthood.

In 1950, Francis joined the Dominican Order, the Order of Preachers, and was ordained to the priesthood in 1956. At the Aquinas Institute, he earned a Ph.D. in Theology, and then was appointed to teach homiletics (preaching) at the Dominican seminary in Dubuque, Iowa. During his seven years of teaching, Francis wrote three books on preaching. He helped found the Catholic Homiletic Society (which no longer exists) and served as its president and, later, as its executive secretary.

In 1967, Francis was invited to a week-long charismatic Protestant retreat. Among the leaders were Rev. Tommy Tyson and Agnes Sanford. It was at this retreat that Francis asked for prayer to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. Not long after, he experienced a dramatic turning point in his ministry. Agnes Sanford told him that he would be used to bring healing prayer back to the Catholic Church. He began praying for the sick and many were either completely healed or noticeably improved. More and more he realized that a very important part of Jesus' ministry (healing and deliverance through the power of the Holy Spirit) had been commonplace in the early church, but had been largely overlooked or ignored in the modern church. In 1977, Francis was one of the speakers at the famous Conference on Charismatic Renewal at Kansas City's Arrowhead Stadium.

Francis was one of the first Roman Catholic priests to be involved in charismatic renewal and in an active healing ministry. He was an instrumental member of the group of charismatic leaders that formed the Charismatic Concerns Committee (CCC) in the early 1970s. The CCC was later re-named the Charismatic Leaders Fellowship, and Francis served as its chairman for several years.

As the charismatic movement gained momentum in the early '70s, Francis

became widely known and respected among Catholics and Protestants for his teachings about healing prayer and the power of the Holy Spirit to transform lives. He resigned his administrative positions and began a full-time traveling ministry, preaching and teaching with teams that included Catholic and Protestants, such as Fr. Mike Scanlan and Ruth Carter Stapleton. In just a few short years, Francis ministered in 31 countries on five continents. Merton House in St. Louis was his home base, as well as a center for charismatic renewal in St. Louis, where 60 priests were involved. In 1976, Francis became a founder of the Association of Christian Therapists, whose purpose was to bring healing prayer into the medical profession.

Francis first met Judith Sewell when he was a speaker at an international conference in Jerusalem (1975). Their paths crossed again, through ministry, two years later. They were married in 1980 and settled in Clearwater, Florida, where they established Christian Healing Ministries that same year. Since the very beginning of their marriage, Francis and Judith have travelled widely, speaking and ministering together. In 1987, at the invitation of the Episcopal Diocese of Florida, they moved to Jacksonville, Florida, and expanded Christian Healing Ministries into a healing center for prayer ministry and training.

In 1993, Francis received a dispensation from the Church and their marriage was celebrated with a ceremony officiated by the Most Reverend John Snyder, Bishop of the Diocese of St. Augustine, at Marywood Retreat Center in Jacksonville. Francis and Judith have two grown children, Rachel and David.

In 2007, the International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Service in the Vatican co-sponsored an international conference with Christian Healing Ministries for 450 Catholic leaders from 42 countries. Held in Jacksonville, the purpose of the six-day conference was to bring the teachings of Francis and Judith to the worldwide Church.

Francis' entire ministry has been dedicated to bringing healing prayer back to its rightful place among Christians. In 1974, he wrote [Healing](#), which has become a classic. He also has written [The Power to Heal](#), [The Prayer That Heals](#), [Overcome by the Spirit](#), [Deliverance from Evil Spirits](#), [Can Homosexuality Be Healed?](#) and [The Healing Reawakening](#). He and Judith co-authored [Praying for Your Unborn Child](#).

In 2008, Francis named Judith his successor as President of Christian Healing Ministries. Francis graduated to heaven on January 12, 2020 after a short illness.

Biography of Judith MacNutt

Judith C. MacNutt is a native of Jackson, Kentucky. As a young girl, Judith would frequently observe her mother praying in their home for the hurting people who were drawn to her for help. Judith too began to experience a deep desire to help others. This led her to earn a Master's degree in psychology at Eastern Kentucky University.

Upon graduation, Judith moved to Boston, where she worked as a clinical psychologist at several area hospitals. As she worked with her patients, she discovered that psychological therapy alone was inadequate to meet the needs of suffering people. Judith had a deep faith and prayed to God for an answer as to why the patients did not improve. More and more, she sensed that the Lord was saying, "Bring them to Me." As she began to quietly pray for her patients, she saw immediate results as they began changing in remarkable ways.

In 1974 Judith felt drawn to move to Jerusalem, where the Southern Baptists offered her a property where she started a House of Prayer. The House of Prayer was unique in that they ministered to both Jews and Arabs. Judith remained in Jerusalem for three years where she had the opportunity of seeing many people healed through prayer at a time when healing prayer was not well known or practiced in the life of the church. Her experience in Jerusalem only served to confirm her belief that all people suffer in similar ways, and need God's healing touch if they are to be made whole.

In 1977, Judith moved to Clearwater, Florida, and opened a private counseling practice which provided both prayer ministry and professional help to members of the Christian community. She saw many clients whose lives were dramatically transformed by prayer.

Judith first met Francis MacNutt briefly in Jerusalem in 1975 and they married in 1980. That same year they co-founded Christian Healing Ministries, Inc. (CHM) in Clearwater, Florida. In 1987, at the invitation of the Episcopal Diocese of Florida, the MacNutt's relocated CHM to Jacksonville, Florida where they expanded the ministry to include Schools of Healing Prayer.

The blending of Francis and Judith's spiritual gifts created a unique healing ministry. Their combined ministry of teaching and praying for physical and emotional healing has brought completeness to their individual ministries. Together and separately, they have been invited as key speakers at healing conferences, seminaries and hospitals. Their common goal has always been to help people become more aware of the love of Jesus Christ and the power and effectiveness of healing prayer.

Judith has dedicated her life to helping those bound by hurt, pain and trauma, that they may find freedom and wholeness through inner healing prayer. She is known and respected for her wisdom, love and compassion.

In 2008, Francis named Judith his successor as President of CHM. As Director of Ministry and President of CHM, Judith oversees the organization, writes, teaches, and travels as a conference speaker.

Following the births of their two children, Rachel and David, Judith (with Francis) co-authored [Praying for Your Unborn Child](#). Judith has authored two books: [Angels Are For Real](#) and *[Encountering Angels](#)*.

The Interview

(Conducted by David Kyle Foster in 2003)

David: Francis, I am very interested in the first spark in your childhood of knowing God. When did you first know He existed, and how did you perceive a call from Him to the ministry?

Francis: As far back as I can remember I believed in God. My dad was a Christian, and a Catholic and saw that I went with him to church every Sunday. I never went to a religious school or anything like that, but I was always very serious about God, and was very obedient to what I knew of God's law. I probably went to excess, kind of like Paul, a super-Christian in a lot of ways. There was some legalism in much of that, but I was always very intent on believing God, wanting to do His will, avoiding sin as best I could, all of that, as far back as I can remember.

There was no huge period of sewing wild oats or anything like that. I was in the Army during World War II for a couple of years and anyone that's in the Army knows that morally, it's not the best place to be. On the weekends the guys would go into town. A lot of them would get drunk, and find a woman or something like that. I had a very good friend; we were both baseball players and would hang out together. We were a good influence on each other, and we knew the difficulties. He was a very handsome young athlete, and there were actually bets with one Red Cross girl that she could get him, you know. And so he was a great help and a great companion, and we were very intent on trying to do whatever the right thing was.

David: Did he lead you deeper into your relationship with Christ?

Francis: I wouldn't say we talked a whole lot about it, but we held each other steady, and we were just very good friends. I had a little pocket New Testament and I'd get that out and read it at least once a day. So in things like that I tried to be faithful to God.

David: And how did that evolve into a sense that you were being called to be a Catholic priest?

Francis: It took a little time. I never was sure what I wanted to do with my life. I had been a pre-med student in college, and had been accepted into medical school, which is a real achievement. But just 10 days before I was to enter medical school I was the only one in the whole class who got drafted into the Army. At the time, it seemed like a tragedy because I would have been a doctor by the age of 23, but instead, I got assigned as a medic in the Medical Corps. I had an injury on my knee, which kept me from going

overseas, so I worked as an orderly - the lowest form of life in a hospital.

After that I decided that medicine wasn't what I was being called to do, yet I didn't know what I was called to do. With the GI Bill, I got enough money to go back to Harvard and finally graduate.

After that I thought I'd go into writing plays or something like that, so I enrolled in the Theater Department at Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. Ed McMann was a classmate - you know, of Johnny Carson fame - and Philip Bosco - an actor on Broadway and the movies. But I still didn't know what I wanted to do, really. I didn't think I wanted to be an actor; I didn't think I was good enough at it anyway.

Although I enjoyed my time earning a Master's degree at the university, I still didn't know what I wanted to do. The girl I was going with at the time gave me a copy of Thomas Merton's, *Seven Story Mountain*. Merton's life paralleled mine in a lot of ways. Half way through his life, he entered a monastery, which shook me up a bit. So I decided to pray about it, because in those days, as a Catholic and a man, the best way you could follow the Lord was to become a priest. So I spent a year trying to figure it out.

So I entered seminary and became a Dominican in 1950. It was a very unfamiliar kind of setting because I'd never had much religious training, but I studied very hard, and was ordained in 1956 - a little early because I was a veteran in my 30s. They put me to work almost right away, teaching and preaching to the seminary students. So that is what I did for about 7 years.

In those days there were a lot of Catholic seminarians. We had 50 in my novitiate class who entered with me. By the time we were ordained, it was down to 25, because they were very selective. I mean, a lot of guys were asked to leave. Others found it too difficult and left on their own for one reason or another.

David: How did you get from there to being involved with Agnes Sanford and the healing ministry?

Francis: About this time, I met some Protestant seminary teachers at the annual convention of the Speech Association of America who introduced me to a woman named Jo Kimmel who knew Agnes Sanford and who prayed for healing. That fascinated me. And so, I had dinner with her and asked her numerous questions about healing. She claimed that it happened all the time.

I knew about healing from reading about the lives of saints, but they were always in some other country and lived in another century. You wouldn't expect it in Dubuque, Iowa, which is where I was teaching. I was fascinated by this, and I and another priest persuaded her to stay over. We put her up in a convent and talked to her for a couple of days about all this. She then decided to scholarship me to attend "The Camp Farthest Out" in Tennessee in August 1967.

She told me that the leaders there believed in the baptism of the Spirit, which I had already read about in books like, *They Speak in Other Tongues* and *The Cross and The Switchblade*.

David: Was any of this going on in the Catholic world at the time?

Francis: Not that I knew of. It was about the same time when the famous Duquesne weekend took place in Pittsburgh, which kicked off the charismatic renewal among some Catholic leaders.

David: What year was that?

Francis: My experience at Duquesne took place in August of 1967. And so I went to this camp not knowing what to expect but being very open. I was very curious about this because of what I had read in *The Cross and The Switchblade*. I had a Ph.D. in theology, and it seemed to me that this was perhaps a correspondent of what happened in the early church.

It was an extraordinary experience for me, but with these people it was more ordinary. I was amazed to see 700 people at Maryville College in Knoxville, Tennessee, there to spend a whole week, and 90 of them were ministers. They had a ministers' meeting every day, and the speakers were Tommy Tyson, Agnes Sanford, and Derek Prince.

David: And Tommy became a lifelong friend from that.

Francis: They all did. I got to know them all, but especially Tommy. Tommy was like a brother to me. I was the first Catholic priest they had ever had, so I became an instant celebrity. People who knew who I was came up and said they were praying for me, and all of that.

David: Did they try to get you born again?

Francis: Yeah. It was very confusing really, but they were very loving. The thing that impressed me about the whole group of people was that these were ordinary people, married people with their families, very loving, and it was kind of natural for them to be talking about Jesus and then be talking about their kids. I mean it wasn't like they put on another hat. They were just doing what you are supposed to be doing as Christians. And so I was very impressed with the people. I was also impressed with the 90 ministers there. They were spending a week of their vacation to learn more about God, and they were ministers!

David: Did they lay hands on you to receive an impartation of some sort or an anointing to be able to pray in the healing ministry?

Francis: At that point, it wasn't so much healing that I was interested in. It was the baptism of the Spirit. I was very open to it.

The very first evening, they passed a microphone around to get a sense of what people were asking for, and for those who might have a testimony about

having received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

People were standing up and saying various things, which was good, but I was kind of disappointed because I was looking for people who wanted to be baptized in the Spirit to see what that was. I found out that there were four leaders you could go to if you were interested in the baptism of the Spirit.

David: Describe the experience of having prayer for the baptism of the Spirit.

Francis: I was sitting way in the back and decided to let people know who I was by wearing my black suit and collar. I stood up and said that I was a Catholic priest, and that I had come to receive the baptism of the Spirit. Everyone turned around and looked at me.

This was the Bible Belt and in 1967, Catholics and Protestants didn't meet together. Things are a lot different now, but in those days there was a big chasm between the two.

After the shock wore off, an older Episcopal priest with a long white beard, a little elfin guy, stood up. He was very excited and said, "Brother Francis, if you'd do me the honor of coming to my group, I'd love to pray for you." So I signed up to pray with him three days later.

All during the week people were coming up to me saying, "Have you received it yet?" And you didn't know what to say really. I said, "Well, my appointment isn't until Wednesday at 11." I felt so stupid. But they were very loving.

So at 11 o'clock I went. There were about a dozen people in the room; six of us to receive the baptism of the Spirit, and the others to pray. An Episcopal priest stood on one side and Jo Kimmel on the other as companions in prayer. Father Sherwood then gave a half-hour explanation of the baptism of the Spirit.

After he finished explaining, he prayed a general prayer for all five of us together. By then, I had my hands out, waiting for something to happen, and nothing happened.

They asked each of the five what had happened. The first one was a Baptist minister. You could tell by looking at his face that nothing had happened, and that's what he said. So they asked him if he had prayed in tongues, and he said, "No." Then they asked him if he wanted to. He wasn't too sure, so we had a five-minute explanation of why that was important. They then asked him if he was willing to do that and he said, "All right. I'll do it." So they prayed for him, and asked him to repeat after them as they repeated some syllables. As he repeated them, they jumped up and down, clapping their hands. But I was looking at his face, and clearly nothing had happened, which bothered me.

The next guy was older, and he was really blissed out - I mean something had

really happened to him.

Next, they came to me, and I said, “Well, before you come to me, I’d like to go back to that pastor because if he was supposed to have an experience, he should be the one that knows whether he had the experience, not you, and I think he may have just imitated those syllables.”

David: You said that in the meeting?

Francis: Yeah, they didn’t like that too much. Somebody turned to me and said, “Well did you pray in tongues?” I said, “Well, no, I didn’t.” They said, “Were you open to it?” I said, “Oh, yeah, I’m open to it.” And so they prayed again for me, and I prayed in something that sounded like Russian, very fluent. They were so glad and applauded my apparent Russian tongue. But I did not have an interior experience to go with it, and I had come for an interior experience of the Spirit. And so again, I felt I had to be honest about it. I hated to rain on their parade, yet said, “You know? I think there is an experiential element to this, and I just feel the same. I did it, but didn’t experience any such thing.”

David: So you thought you might have just been making it up because they expected you to say something?

Francis: Yeah, it could be. Children make up languages. I wanted a real experience, but as soon as I said that, somebody implied that my problem was intellectual pride. And I said, “Well I’ve always known that, but I am doing the best I can.”

There was a Lutheran minister present who got up with tears in his eyes. He threw his arms around me and said, “Now I can see that even a Catholic priest can receive the baptism of the Spirit.” Although I realized he was saying that in love, it seemed like a kind of backhanded compliment.

I didn’t know how to respond to any of this. Our period lasted well beyond noon (when there was another group coming in) because of all this, and I felt awful about it. So I went into the dining hall, people were lined up buffet style, big, big lines, and the speakers of course had the right to cut in line anywhere they wanted because they were speakers.

Agnes Sanford saw me standing in line and asked me what my experience was. I explained my confusion - that I really wanted this - but was confused. She replied, “Well, I did not want to say anything to detour you, but I felt that the way they would pray was probably not right. I could see in your face that you already had the Spirit, and I felt that the way they should’ve prayed was that the Spirit that is in you through baptism, confirmation and ordination be released.”

She didn’t offer to pray with people very often. She was older and had enough to do without doing that, but she said, “If you would like to pray, I don’t have

an opening until tomorrow evening, but I would be very happy to do that.” And that made sense to me.

So the next evening, she prayed with me, and I was filled with overwhelming joy. I started laughing and the laughter went on until it was time for her next talk.

Agnes spoke some words of prophesy over me - mainly that God would use me in the healing ministry to bring healing back to the Catholic church, which largely came true.

So that was a very moving experience. The way it happened to me was difficult, but the story has helped a lot of people put it together with what they have already experienced in their churches.

David: The late John Wimber used to teach that - that the baptism was a release of the Spirit that you already had by virtue of being a believer. From that night, how did God lead you into healing ministry?

Francis: I believed right away that healing and deliverance were a part of it. A year later (1968) I attended a 5-day school of pastoral care for ministers in Whitinsville, Massachusetts that was taught by Tommy Tyson, John Sanford, and Agnes Sanford. I learned a lot in those days.

Having found out about the baptism of the Spirit and how it influenced peoples’ lives, I began to share this in talks to different groups, especially to priests, and always afterwards there would be a few who would ask to receive prayer for it. So, I got into it kind of naturally.

By this time I was living in St. Louis, and was the president of the Catholic Homiletic Society - an organization of 1,100 Catholics, mostly priests - and the editor of their journal called *Preaching*. In Matthew 10, Jesus said to preach that the kingdom of God is at hand, to heal and to cast out evil spirits. John Wimber had the same concept about preaching the kingdom. So I would write and speak about this quite openly, and many would ask me to pray for them.

David: Were you getting in trouble with your bishop for teaching these kinds of things?

Francis: No, I wasn’t. It was amazing how well it was received, considering it was new. We started a prayer meeting in St. Louis in 1968 at a Catholic High School called Visitation Academy, which grew very quickly. A number of sisters got baptized in the Spirit and in about 2 years the weekly meeting had grown to 300 people. People from all over the city of St. Louis were coming. A lot of priests and sisters from St. Louis University would come. I would give talks and testimony on the baptism of the Spirit, and then we’d pray for them and they would get baptized in the Spirit and take it back to their parishes. By the time I left St. Louis in 1980 there were something like

60 priests actively involved, with something like 100 charismatic Catholic prayer groups in the city. It was extraordinary what went on.

By then, the cardinal had become concerned and called in the head of the convent and asked her about this praying in tongues. She thought for a moment, and said, “Well your excellency, this is like praying the rosary; you say the words, but you think of the mysteries.” And he didn’t know how to respond to that. So he let it continue.

By 1969, a lot of priests had gotten involved in it and I was becoming well known. Finally, at an annual meeting of the Catholic Homiletic Society, the board of directors said, “Now, Francis, we think you should make a decision. We’re trying to reach middle of the road priests, pastors, and parishes, and you are getting known for being out there on the frontier and on the fringe, and we think for the good of our group you should either drop that or go ahead as you are now. We’d love to keep you, but if you are going to pray for healing and things like that, you probably should consider whether you should stay with us.”

I thought about that for a little while and decided to resign. I then began traveling and speaking on the baptism of the Spirit.

David: So the cardinal allowed you to travel around the world to minister and teach others about this kind of ministry?

Francis: My superiors trusted me, they really did. In the 1970s I traveled to Latin America maybe a dozen times, a month at a time, to Africa or Nigeria for 6 weeks. I think I went to 30 countries in the 1970s.

David: Were your audiences all Catholic or was it a mix?

Francis: It was a mix, but mostly Catholic. Frequently, however, we had ecumenical teams, often with United Methodist evangelist, Tommy Tyson. Ruth Carter Stapleton, (President Jimmy Carter’s sister), worked with me on a number of those teams back in the early 1970s before her brother was elected president. She got so popular, however, that we could not afford her anymore, so that ended that.

We had very talented groups of people who went around. At some of the conferences, we had 10 people on the team. I gave a lot of priest retreats and some of those were extraordinary, like our trip to Australia in the mid-1970s. There, we held a five-day retreat for 220 priests, including two bishops, and almost all of them asked for the baptism of the Spirit.

David: When did you write your first book?

Francis: I wrote a book called *Healing* in 1974. That was an interesting development. Ave Maria Press had asked me if I would write a book on the subject, which I wrote in less than three months.

Then, the Notre Dame conference chose healing as its main topic and 35,000 people showed up. At the time, many Catholic charismatics believed that healing was a Protestant phenomenon. And so, when I'd speak to groups of Catholics like that, I'd say, "No this is not Protestant. This goes back in Catholic history and actually it suits us perhaps even more than it suits Protestants. They have their difficulties, too, accepting it."

David: *Healing* became an international best seller, didn't it?

Francis: It did and it's still out there. It is amazing; the silver anniversary edition was printed several years ago and the Ave Maria edition sold 300,000. Altogether it has sold about a million copies to date.

David: And it crossed over into the Protestant world, which was very unusual.

Francis: Yes, it was. I've always been concerned about reaching out to Protestants, and the fascinating thing is that if there's one word that's used to describe my books, it's "balanced." It's the result of my Thomist theological training, really. St. Thomas Aquinas respected the people who disagreed with him, and whenever he covered a question, he would enumerate several of the top objections of his critics. In his responses, he would try to accept whatever was good in the other person's position.

David: So tell us the story of how you met your wife? When did you first see her and how did you work through your vow of celibacy as a priest in order to get married?

Francis: I first met her in 1975 at a huge conference in Jerusalem. It was a Full Gospel Businessmen-type conference attended by over 5,000 people. Pat Roberson, Larry Christensen, and Jamie Buckingham were all there. It was like the swan song for Kathryn Kuhlman, coming toward the end of her career.

Part of the event was a small meeting for theologians and about 200 came. I gave a talk, and one of the priests there introduced me to Judith. I remember meeting her - that was all - saying hello and noticing that she was a very attractive, intelligent person, and then going on.

David: Judith, what was happening in your mind when that happened.

Judith: I was in Jerusalem, running a house of prayer. Prior to that, I had been working as a psychologist in Boston, when the Lord showed me that He wanted me conducting a ministry of reconciliation in Jerusalem. A friend of mine (Lynne Sunderland) joined me there and we opened a house of prayer called Jerusalem House.

I had discovered the power of God to heal in the hospital in Boston, when in praying for my patients, they started getting well. But I really didn't know anything about it. My new pastor in Israel, Dr. Robert Lindsey, was a

respected scholar and elder in the Southern Baptist Convention who had just experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He encouraged me to go to the meeting to hear Francis, and that afternoon I was on my way into the old city with two friends, and Francis pulled up in front of the Catholic Center for studies in the Holy Land. He had a turtleneck sweater on. He was a very striking man, very handsome, very tall, and very shy. He looked over, and we said hello and he smiled. Later, when I went to the meeting for theologians, Father Martin introduced Father Francis MacNutt, and he walked out in his collar. I was stunned because I had just seen him two or three hours before, but I didn't know he was a Catholic priest.

When I moved to Israel, I had decided to read Agnes Sanford's book, *Sealed Orders*, and not to date anymore. I was in my mid 20s and decided that I was going to let God choose my husband. So Francis was the first man that I had looked at in a long time, and when I found out he was a Catholic priest, it sort of dashed that hope!

We didn't see each other for a year or two after that. Finally, I decided to go to a five-day conference on healing in Staten Island, New York that Francis was giving and learned so much about healing, inner healing and deliverance, but didn't see him again for probably a year. At that point, the Lord led me to Clearwater, Florida to work with The Spirit of God Community, (a large charismatic Catholic community), where I volunteered to offer people therapy and healing prayer.

We were just beginning to see people healed when a Baptist pastor from Pretoria, South Africa finally gave us the missing piece of the deliverance ministry. None of us knew anything about deliverance really. He stayed with us for about six months, taking Dr. Lindsey, Lynn and me under his wing.

David: What was a Baptist doing working for a charismatic Catholic community?

Judith: I had grown up Southern Baptist and my fellowship in Jerusalem was Baptist. When I got to Clearwater, I attended a traditional Baptist church and met with the pastor (Bill Anderson) to tell him about the healing and deliverance ministry that I was a part of. He wanted no part of it, however.

And so, because I didn't feel that I could have my prayers for people blessed there, I began to study under a Catholic priest and was eventually received into the Catholic Church. I felt very drawn to the sacraments, to the liturgy and to the rich history of the church.

David: How did you work through the fear that many Baptists and other Protestants have that Catholics aren't really saved?

Judith: Well, I think it was because God gave me such a beautiful exposure to the Roman Catholic Church through the renewal. The community was 500 strong there, and they really knew Jesus, and they knew the Holy Spirit, and

they prayed for healing, and it was a very alive fellowship. So any fears that I might have had about it being “the whore of Babylon” were quickly quenched.

Just being around all of those Christians, they were so beautiful, and they loved the Lord, and they loved to pray for people, and they wanted to learn. They were all receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and they had been really set free, and so I found a wonderful home with them, more than with the Baptists at that time.

I still love the Southern Baptist church, but it does need to have a fresh wind of the Holy Spirit to blow through it. So does the Catholic Church, for that matter. There are many traditional Catholic churches that need a re-visitation of the renewal. Many people say it’s plateaued, but it hasn’t. God’s not finished with the traditional churches yet.

So anyway, I was fellowshiping with the Catholics and praying with their people, and ministering to them, and I didn’t know it, but the very people that I was staying with were good friends with Francis. In fact, they were the heads of The Spirit of God Community.

Francis came there to write his books and I saw him there one day. So we met in Jerusalem, New York, and now in Clearwater, and he would come and stay for periods of time between trips. We were often thrown together through the home church and prayer groups, and we started writing each other post cards and letters, and when he would come back to town I would have a meal with him and talk with him.

After quite a long time, we both realized that we were starting to fall in love and that maybe God was bringing us together for another purpose, not just friendship. And so we spent three months asking God what His will was for our lives. We went to a retreat center with 12 other Christian leaders and shared our hearts with them and asked them to pray and guide us through this, and after several days of praying with these leaders, we felt like God was calling us to marry, and so we did, in 1980.

Francis: The leaders, who were Catholic, were mostly against it, by the way.

David: What convinced you that leaving the priesthood to marry was God’s will?

Francis: It was very difficult because everyone was saying, “You can’t do this! You’ve made a vow! You knew what you were doing when you became a priest. Going contrary to that is tantamount to going AWOL, like deserting the ship.”

Another argument was that the marriage would destroy the great ministry that God had given me. “Why blow it up?”

I remember one Catholic leader, when I told her that we were going to marry,

just started crying. That was a typical response. It wasn't always anger, just a sadness knowing what was going to happen.

David: And these were very conservative Catholics who probably believed that you would lose your salvation if you left the church.

Francis: Yeah, some of them. In those days there was an automatic excommunication attached to a priest leaving to marry. You were out of the church. So that was hard. Upon marrying, I wouldn't be able to receive the sacraments, so there was a lot going against our decision.

In addition to the fact that I had fallen in love, there was an advantage to a man and a woman ministering together. There's a different way of looking at things. Women often have a greater gift of praying for the inner child in a person - all of that. It was just a great compliment.

Back in the 1970s, if I had a woman on a prayer team, I'd have to have two so there wouldn't be any suggestion that I was pairing off, or something like that. So I could see an advantage in ministry. Plus, I think everybody knows that in the early church many leaders were married, so celibacy is a disciplinary rule of the church. There is nothing in the nature of things that would say that a priest has to be celibate.

David: And the Roman Catholic Church today is allowing former Anglican priests who are married to become Catholic priests and remain married.

Francis: That's right. Everybody knows it's a disciplinary law that could be changed. Something like 20,000 priests in this country are in my situation. They were active as priests, and now most of them are married. That is the usual reason for leaving, though not the only reason.

David: What did you think about the Catholic church's teaching that with your excommunication would come a loss of your salvation?

Francis: Only God can say who is saved and who is lost. That ultimately depends on God.

David: But what if you were wrong? You must have really loved Judith to be taking such a risk.

Francis: Well, that's true, yeah. A lot of people said the marriage wouldn't last. "You're too old," they'd say. I was 54 and she was 32.

David: And so you left the Catholic Church because they gave you the left foot of fellowship.

Francis: I didn't make a decision to leave the church. That wasn't it at all! The decision was to marry. It wasn't like I wanted to leave the church, that wasn't the point, but it was the inevitable consequence at the time.

David: Did you then go to the Episcopal Church and did they ordain you? How did that work?

Francis: No. The Episcopal bishop in Jacksonville, Florida asked if we would like to move there and offered to put the diocese behind us, except financially because we weren't even Episcopalians, which is kind of extraordinary. They wanted a healing center, and so they introduced us to a number of people and after that it was up to us to make a go of it.

David: So you were an independent parachurch ministry at that point then?

Francis: Yes. We have our own [Christian Healing Ministries](#) foundation as it were. We had to make a go of that, but without the financial assistance of the Episcopal church.

David: What happened in the years between your 1980 marriage and your 1987 move to Jacksonville?

Francis: I had a lot of free time, so I wrote several books - *The Prayer That Heals* and *Praying for Your Unborn Child*. We also got invitations from Protestant groups to speak. There weren't too many in the beginning, but with a family on the way that wasn't terrible. Judith's counseling practice financed us. She was a counselor and had her office there in Clearwater.

Judith: God had led me to start a practice called Christian Counseling Services. There were several therapists that worked with me over the years, and it was very ecumenical. We saw people from all different denominations. Roman Catholics continued to come, along with Episcopalians and Baptists. It took about a year to build a practice.

After our wedding, when people found out that Francis was available, the speaking engagements started coming in from all denominations, except the Catholic.

David: Were you integrating what Francis and you had been learning about healing in your counseling practice?

Judith: Yes. That was what was so wonderful because before I'd been in a hospital where I couldn't really pray with people; I could pray for them, but not with them. And then in Israel, I had learned so much about inner healing and deliverance, so the people that came knew that part of their therapeutic treatment would be prayer and spiritual direction, and we saw tremendous healings take place with people who were suffering from emotional illnesses.

David: It seems that the birth of your healing ministry was almost like the birth of child. There was the pain and trauma of leaving the Catholic Church, but then there was the blessing of the child that emerged.

Judith: Yes.

Francis: I tried not to attack the Catholic Church or even to join another church or ministry so as not to add one more divisive element to the whole situation. I did apply twice to the Vatican for dispensation, so that our

marriage would be recognized in the Catholic Church, and finally after 13 years, the dispensation came through, so in 1993 we were married in the Catholic Church.

David: Sacramentally?

Francis: Sacramentally, our marriage was renewed by the bishop here, so we are now Catholics in good standing.

David: Does the Catholic Church consider you a priest today?

Francis: Well, I'm not an ex-priest. In Catholic theology, being made a priest leaves an indelible and eternal mark in your soul, but today I am not allowed to exercise the ministry of a priest except in an emergency. If somebody was dying out there, for example, I could hear their confession. But I'm no longer clergy. I'm a layman.

David: Didn't the Vatican recently invite you and Judith to attend a conference on healing in Rome?

Francis: Yes. It was extraordinary. Three groups sponsored an invitational conference on healing for three days to try to sort out questions about healing. Being married, I was amazed to receive the invitation, and then even more amazed the next day when Judith got an invitation. So we went to Rome not as speakers, but just to attend.

David: Did either of you struggle with bitterness and anger over having been set-aside during those intervening years?

Judith: I think the hardest part, maybe the saddest part, was more a grieving than an anger.

Francis: Yeah, a sadness.

Judith: It's a deep sadness that people like Francis, who was a very loyal Catholic, who loved and embraced the Catholic faith his whole life, had to lose the fellowship of a church that he loved so much. But it brought great rejoicing when the pope finally gave Francis his dispensation and blessed our marriage so we could go back into that fellowship again.

There are many people who suffer similar losses with their denominations when they can no longer embrace what they are asked to embrace. We see that now in the Episcopal Church with the consecration of the openly gay bishop. We've seen deep grieving in our Episcopalian friends that we've journeyed so closely with. It was they who opened their hearts and their arms to us when we were excommunicated. They gave us a home and embraced our children. It was wonderful to have part of the body of Christ embrace us at that time, and we still have a deep love for the Episcopal Church because of that.

What we find is that under the anger that people feel, there is always pain, and

that's the pain of the loss and the grieving. And so we go through this - all of us, as Christians - go through this like we are doing now with our Episcopal brothers and sisters. It's a deep grieving and a deep loss. Where do you go if you no longer feel theologically at home somewhere? And even though you go somewhere new, there is always the pain of the loss of the old and the familiar that you were raised with.

Francis: In 1973, when we appeared on the cover of *Charisma*, there were several letters, hot letters, saying things like: "Why do you put forth Francis MacNutt as representing the Catholic renewal when he is no longer a Catholic? He's a disgrace! Why do you choose him? Are you against Catholics?" - real hot letters, and you hate to be the source of all that.

But the good thing is that since I don't stand up in a collar anymore, I don't represent something that most people can't accept. Like last month we had a conference in New Mexico sponsored by the Catholic Church and four Pentecostal churches. Now that configuration never happens and I was the one speaker that they could agree on, both the Catholics and the Pentecostals.

David: So God has taken this trauma and this pain, and He's made something wonderful out of it. He has given birth to something new!

Francis: Something good has really come out of it, yeah.

David: Let me ask you a theological question. As you know, the Episcopal Church consecrated an active homosexual as bishop of New Hampshire. What do you think about the question of someone who has left the historic faith being consecrated a bishop. Is he truly a bishop?

Francis: That question came up in the fourth century in the Donatist controversy. I'd say he probably is a bishop, but that doesn't mean you agree with him on that. I'm not really sure though, so I'd hate to definitively say. I haven't thought that one through.

David: In recent years we have seen a number of Catholic priests exposed for having molested teenage boys. What is going on there?

Francis: Pedophilia is the molestation of children. But from what I understand, the majority of those cases involved teenage boys, which is called ephebophilia. It seems to me that would be homosexuality. It's a very difficult thing.

I've written a short book called, *Homosexuality Can Be Healed*. In it, I talk about a number of misconceptions that need to be cleared away. For example, the homosexual inclination can lead to problems, but is not itself the problem. Often, the problem is that the young man is missing a relationship with his father. He is looking for somebody to take the place of his father - a need that sometimes becomes sexualized. So often they need to be with an older man. There is a search to fill in that missing aspect of the person's life. It's just part

of the tragedy of human existence.

Sometimes an older man can fill that need in a nonsexual way over a period of time, but in our experience God can fill that in. It's a long haul though, so the homosexual population in the church needs to be treated with great love and compassion, yet often they're treated with scorn, which is a tragedy.

Going back to the question of the gay bishop - what doesn't seem to be discussed openly is the nature of the physical act that goes on between homosexuals. In polite society you don't talk about that. Homosexuals may be very loving people, but that's not the issue, that's not the real question. The real question doesn't get debated.

David: In these particular scandals, you have adult men molesting teenage boys. It's homosexuality, but it's something more, isn't it?

Francis: Yeah, it is. The sad thing is, when I was active as a priest, you didn't hear about this at all. If anything, the group of priests I knew were homophobic. They didn't understand it at all. But somehow, in the Catholic Church today, the number of priests who are homosexual in orientation is a sizable proportion. One priest, Father Donald Cousins, who is highly respected, estimates that 40% of Catholic priests are homosexual in orientation, and perhaps 50% of seminarians, although it differs from seminary to seminary.

It seems to me that this is creating an enormous problem for the future, and it's not being dealt with. It's not just what happened 20 years ago with priests molesting young men, it's a question for right now and the future. How do you allow somebody with a homosexual orientation to get training for the priesthood when he's in an all-male environment with young men? You'd think it would be a great difficulty going through that.

David: Someone has suggested that homosexuals need to have their confused orientation healed before they are allowed into the priesthood. What do you think about that?

Francis: Unfortunately, I don't think there is that much known among the clergy as a whole about healing the homosexual. That is why we are trying to bring healing back into the Church. Even with physical healing, it's not fully understood in the population of priests that it can take place.

David: You've had a lot of success in your ministry with healing the homosexual. What do you do? How do you pray for a homosexual?

Francis: We've had some and Judith's had more actually. She had 20 clients when she was seeing patients in Clearwater who were either homosexual or lesbian in orientation, and they were all healed. Now, it took time. I think that really needs to be said. It is mostly over a period of time and in some depth.

David: Tell a story or two of people that you minister to in this area, Judith,

to illustrate how you try to help the homosexual.

Judith: The first thing that has to be said is that they must want to be healed. By and large there are a lot of homosexuals and lesbians that are very happy with their lifestyle. They have found someone that they really care about, and they want to remain in that lifestyle.

The people that came to me knew they were coming to a Christian psychotherapist, that they would be prayed for, who admitted that they didn't want to live that lifestyle, and that they wanted to change. Back in the days when I worked in hospitals, we never saw a heroin addict healed, for example, unless they truly wanted to give up heroin.

As in any area of our lives whether it's weakness, sin, or whatever, we have to ask for the help of Jesus.

David: And how would you actually pray for them?

Judith: The actual prayer itself is not that much different than it would be for anybody else who is wounded in any area of their life. So many of us struggle with broken sexuality because of the way we were raised, the way we were taught, the ways our parents modeled or didn't model healthy sexuality. Because so much of our sexuality is tied up in our identity, these issues need to be healed in most people.

Very few of us really know the true-self that God created. Most of us function out of a false-self, so getting back to the true-self and the true sexual identity is pretty much the same process for any issue that we would work with in inner healing. It involves going back to the childhood, and finding out whether or not the person was wanted. So many people say I didn't want a boy, I wanted a girl, or I didn't want a girl, I wanted a boy, and so there may have been a rejection of their sexual identity from the time they were born.

I was reading somewhere yesterday where it was very important to a certain couple that they have a boy, and they had eight girls, and they kept trying and trying and trying, and finally they had to adopt a boy. Well, what message did that give to the eight daughters? You have no value and you were just a mistake. So there are all kinds of identity issues in childhood; there is rejection, there is wounding, there is sexual abuse, perhaps incest, perhaps someone outside the family.

So many of the people that I worked with had broken identities - they just didn't know who they were in God or why they were here or where they were going. It would usually take about six months of psychotherapy, inner healing and generational healing for the person to come to a fullness of their identity.

David: It is quite common that male homosexuals haven't had a strong father figure to call them into masculinity. How do you pray for that situation?

Judith: I found it took a multifaceted approach. We would do the inner

healing work with God as Father and Jesus as brother coming into the masculine identity that God had already created within them.

In a deep father wound we would do the prayers of God the Father becoming their father, which He is, and then healing the brokenness that relates to the earthly father - the deep longing for Abba, with the daddy figure holding and loving them, accepting rather than rejecting them, having unconditional love for them. We would have them sit with God the Father and let Him hold them during the inner healing prayer. I would have them listen to the voice of God - "What is He saying to you? Is He rejecting you?" And they would always with great tears of joy say, "No. He's telling me He loves me but wants more for me," and God would speak all these beautiful words of love to them, and they would start having healing dreams and healing images and visions. Once the Spirit started working in them, the healing process would begin in earnest.

I also asked for help within the Christian community wherever I've been, especially in private practice. I would ask for men from the community to come and take them under wing and take them out to dinner or take them fishing, take them biking, do whatever, have them in their home and embrace them as part of a loving Christian family. So it's not just prayer.

This is where the church needs to respond. It's men and women stepping forward, parenting, what we would call re-parenting in psychology, and bringing them along. And the ones that were able to go through that experience were all healed.

David: When whatever has gone wrong is finally healed - whether it's the masculine or the feminine identity or whether it's the trauma from child abuse - what then happens to the homosexual identity?

Judith: The homosexual identity cannot coexist with a God-given identity so it just starts to go away. Now the struggle that some would have that were very active sexually, in pornography or in being very promiscuous, those images took longer to go away. It's just like anybody addicted to pornography - the images sometimes remain. That's where discipline and prayer had to come in for the individual to reject those images and to bring in the cross and the blood of Jesus to cover them, and then to put positive images in their place.

David: And in some, I would imagine, the true-self, the true heterosexual identity would begin to flower.

Judith: Oh, yes. The beautiful image starts to emerge within them of the way God created them to be, and they would come to such life in their identity and such joy in being the one that God created them to be. Many of them would say to me, "I always felt like I was living a lie when I was in this lifestyle. I was always full of shame. I was always full of a sense that it really wasn't me. It felt like someone else." It was kind of like an alter-identity or an alter-ego,

because when God starts in a therapeutic process, basically what He is doing is dismantling the ego that has developed, and replacing it with what was originally there, which is still there, but it's under this alter-ego/alter-identity.

Francis: The sad thing is that conservative Christians often don't offer homosexuals anything except condemnation. It often takes six months or more of weekly individual counseling and an intense changing and building up of the individual. Shouting about it doesn't help very much. It just makes things worse.

David: That's one of the things I liked about your book, *Homosexuality Can Be Healed*. You actually lay out a case in terms of statistics from health and psychology that to love the homosexual is to recognize the profound brokenness they are in and to offer them healing. It's not enough to say, go and be blessed and live your lifestyle and destroy yourself, but rather to offer them the hope that Christ gives them.

Francis: And what Judith was sharing too about the length of time it takes, six months or whatever, and seeing a person once a week. The way things are now, however, there just isn't enough help out there. It's got to be magnified and increased. It usually requires intense changing and building up, so this is what we are trying to do.

David: How has healing and inner healing changed from when you started to today and where do you think they are headed?

Francis: There certainly has been a maturation and a development. For example, in the early years, you never heard about satanic ritual abuse. God has also given us a deepening of our understanding of the time element that is involved in healing. It's not all instant. It wasn't in Jesus' ministry either. Look at the beginning of the 18th chapter of Luke where it talks about the time that is needed.

David: Over these last few decades, has the church grown in its understanding of how God heals and are we better at it now?

Francis: Some groups are, very much so. The problem is getting the word out. On national television, you never get the depth you need. Recently, I was talking about it on a national talk show for 15 minutes, but what can you say in 15 minutes?

Judith: The thing that concerns me the most is that in a lot of churches, I still don't see an understanding of the necessity to bring all of the healing disciplines together. For example, in some denominations you'll find a real understanding of deliverance ministry, but they'll have no clue about inner healing. Ninety percent of all demonic activity, as we've come to understand it, is based in trauma or in wounding. Many will cast a demon out of someone, but they won't do the inner healing work that heals the wound, and so the demon comes back.

A very well-known speaker, recently wrote in one of his books that you don't need inner healing if you have forgiveness, and you don't need Christian counselors if you have Jesus, and I found myself feeling very sad that this man who has great influence in our country doesn't understand that people do need inner healing. I've never met a person who didn't.

So still there are the camps, like the faith camp for healing - if you've prayed once you don't need to pray again. Don't bother God with it! - when what we've come to understand is that in many cases you have to literally soak the person in God's love over a period of time. You see the cancer diminish each time you pray. So the person that is prayed for once, and is told, "Go home and have faith that you are healed!" - that person is being deprived of life-giving prayer. It's like God's radiation - you need to keep soaking in God's healing presence.

There's a deliverance ministry that recently made news led by a woman who apparently has no understanding of inner healing. So what's happening to those people that are being prayed for? My guess is she sees the same people over and over again, because the demons of pornography, rejection, self-hatred or whatever that she casts out are going to wander around and come right back to the same people, because they've still got a home. So the great need in the church in America is to understand that all of the Spirit-given ministries work together to bring wholeness to a person.

David: And you see the church now at the point where God is calling us to acknowledge and utilize all of these ministries in people's lives?

Judith: Yes. Christian leaders should take the time to come to ministries like ours, and ask for our inner healing ministry for their people.

David: Let's move on to the charismatic renewal. It seems to have ebbed and flowed in the last 40 years. Why do you think that has been, and what do you think the future holds for the charismatic renewal?

Francis: That's a really great question. In the United States it has certainly ebbed in the mainline denominations. A lot of that, as I see it, is the inability of the mainline denominations to incorporate it into the Sunday worship where people are free to prophesy or pray or whatever. At best they have a little group of two or three people standing by the side altar to pray with people. Now that's good. That's an improvement over 50 years ago, but for these in-depth things, it is woefully inadequate. I've yet to hear of a mainline leader saying from the pulpit, for example, "If you're smoking, (which is one of the number one health problems in the country), come to us and we'll pray for you, and ask God to free you from your smoking addiction." Too many times, there is no understanding of the charisms and the power of the Spirit among the leadership.

David: Why do you think the charismatic renewal got suppressed? What

created that problem?

Francis: It wasn't suppressed; it's been controlled. I think there is always an issue of how do we moderate these things so everybody can go along with it, and so the wacko stuff is weeded out. In Asia, Africa, and Latin America the charismatic renewal is exploding, while in Europe and the United States, it's stalled, except in groups like The Vineyard or the Charismatic Episcopal Church where it's still strong. However, in this country by and large, it's stabilized and been domesticated. But in other parts of the world it's explosively growing so that the largest group of Christians, next to Roman Catholics, are pentecostal evangelical Christians! Most mainline Protestants in this country don't realize that they are outnumbered. They still see charismatics and pentecostals as fringe groups. They don't realize that the main centers of Christianity 25 years from now are no longer going to be Rome and Geneva and New York, but they are going to be New Delhi, Lagos and other such exotic centers. Already, there are 10 times as many Anglicans in Africa as there are in England!

David: Might that be an inscrutable choice of God to do it one place and not another or is there something about Americans and Europeans that quenches the Spirit?

Francis: You know, I think there is a movement to quench the Spirit. It's very human. That's the way it always happens. Dr. William De Arteaga has written a book called *Quenching the Holy Spirit*, and he identified it as a spirit of Phariseism, which keeps returning. I'm currently writing a history of the healing ministry in the church, starting at the beginning up to now, and there have always been attempts to capture and enclose the move of the Spirit.

God usually start things with relatively poor people, like He did with the illiterate laymen, Peter and John. And it usually happens in distant places where there is no control. For example, in Cane Ridge, Kentucky in 1801, there was an extraordinary revival out on the frontier where the theologians in Boston couldn't control it.

David: So the problem then with Westerners perhaps is an over-intellectualization and institutionalization of what needs to be free in the Spirit.

Francis: And everybody's afraid of freedom. You know, it is kind of scary. When it happens, people are thinking, "Let's get this thing controlled," and by the time you've got it controlled, there's nothing really going on. I saw this a lot in the historical research that I did for my upcoming book, *The Healing Reawakening: Reclaiming our Lost Inheritance*. It wasn't a problem of terrible persecution, but rather attempts by fearful European leaders to keep the people from falling over in the Spirit. Theologians feared losing their reputation if people were allowed to get "slain in the Spirit."

I have been commanded on various occasions to stop doing it, and I've tried to explain that I'm not doing it; I'm just praying for people and if they are standing up, chances are some of them are going to fall over. But I'm not doing it. The only way I can stop it is either to not pray for people or have them all sitting down. And even then, they may fall off their chair.

David: I've noticed in the non-charismatic world, that they have adopted charismatic language, so they sound like they agree with us now, but it seems that they've held their position in place, perhaps having redefined the terms

Francis: That could be. That's been the history of everything. It's generally been known that with all the great religious movements, from the birth of the religious orders in the Catholic church in Europe to "The Great Awakenings" in America, the first 20 years were the glory years, but after that there were too many people and someone had to organize it. Unfortunately, the people who started it usually don't have the personalities to organize anything. In short order somebody's going to corral it.

David: Judith, what do you think about the charismatic renewal and where it's heading? What is the Holy Spirit saying to the church today, and where is He taking us in terms of the work of the Spirit?

Judith: I have no idea!

David: That's a great answer actually.

Judith: I wish I knew. My prayer would be that more people would learn to hear God, to really spend time listening to Him. I think the problem is the Spirit comes in waves, again and again to us as individuals and to churches, but we don't listen. We don't follow up on it. We are not faithful with what He asks of us. And we tend to very early push God into boxes - "This is the way God operates, and that's the way I grew up!"

The church I grew up in was a very loving environment, but God only acted in certain ways, so when He came and asked me to pray for people for healing, I was like, "What? You know I'm a psychologist. I can't pray for people in the hospital for healing! That's for tents and faith healers."

The way He broke through in my life was very, very quietly. He very simply asked me to do something, and I finally had the courage and the grace to do it, and people started being healed. People with psychoses and everything started being healed. So He waits for us.

I believe the reason He is visiting other countries right now is because those people have a very childlike, wonderful spirit of openness. When I was in Africa and the Middle East, I found that if you say God will do this, they would respond, "Let's do it." But in this country people will say, "God doesn't work that way; God doesn't do that" or "Why would we want to do that?" We spend so much time and energy trying to convince people this is

what God wants in your church, yet there is fear - fear of the unknown.

As a therapist, I see people afraid to break out of the comfort zone that they have. They're afraid of what God will ask of them, what He will require them to do. "Will it take more than an hour, or a week?" And I say to them, "It will take your whole life," and they go, "No, thanks."

As far as the future of the renewal: I had an image several years ago, and I saw God tearing apart the denominations, and He said, "Some I will have to reduce to ashes, but out of the ashes I will build my church." It frightened me when I first saw it, but where I see some of the denominations going now, I realize God's going to have to do that. They're not going to listen any other way.

You know, we usually only turn to God when we are desperate, when we're in a foxhole, when our child is sick or when we get a terminal diagnosis or lose our job. That's usually when we turn to God. So I think the church is going to have to reach a point where church as we know it no longer works, and out of desperation the church will turn and say help us.

We have two children that are 20 and 22 who don't want to go to church. They've seen God move in our ministry and in other people's ministry, but when they go to church, it's like, follow the bulletin and sing this song and hear this message and go home, and that's not what they want. We were at a church in England over Christmas because our daughter was an exchange student for a year, and it's all people in their 20s and 30s and they have found the Spirit of God. It's an Anglican church, but the top's just being blown off of it, and it's the most exciting place to fellowship, and both of our children said, "This is the way the church should be!" From their fresh, young eyes they saw the Spirit of God working, and they said, "This is it!"

David: For the pastor out there who realizes that everything you have just said is absolutely true, what can you say to him about how to change his church so that it becomes like the one you visited in England?

Judith: I was listening to a testimony of one pastor who lost most of his people after bringing back the renewal from the "Toronto Blessing," and at first he said, "God, what are you doing? All of the people are leaving." But God has since restored 10 times over with new members who are really hungry for God and the things of the Spirit, what he initially lost. So it's not always a wonderful experience when we go with the Holy Spirit, because people will leave. Especially people who give large amounts of money, who generally control what goes on in the church. If you start breaking out with things of the Spirit, many of those people will threaten to withhold their money if you don't stop the move of the Spirit. And they do. They leave and take their money with them. Then the pastor has no salary, but eventually God restores it. That's the whole story of Job. Whatever God has to take away, He always restores.

David: So I hear you saying we need to ask God to give us a new impartation of courage and childlikeness?

Judith: Yes.

David:as well as innocence - the willingness to stand and obey the Holy Spirit, no matter what the consequence.

Judith: And trust - trust that God is God. If we let Him, He will be God, and He will have His way, and as He said to John Wimber, "Give Me back My Church!" You know, it's God's Church. We've made it man's. So we need to return to trusting God for the Church, for our personal walk, that He will heal, and that He will do what He said He would do.

David: Francis, before we conclude, I want to talk about your new book - *The Healing Reawakening: Reclaiming our Lost Inheritance*. It's such an exciting theme. You're writing a retrospective of the healing ministry throughout church history, and attempting to show how emerging theologies have often put a damper on the work of the Holy Spirit during certain periods of church history. Give us a little insight into what you're going to teach us in that book.

Francis: Well, the fascinating thing is that Southern Baptists, for instance, generally don't pray for healing? They're known for being devoted to scripture, and it's in scripture. So why don't they pray for it? The answer is that John Calvin didn't believe in it. He believed it happened back in Jesus' day, and in the Acts of the Apostles, but then it shut down. So they're basically taking their lead from John Calvin. But the ordinary Baptist doesn't know that.

The whole thing about miracles shutting down after the death of the last apostle simply isn't true. In fact, for the first 300 years of church history everybody prayed for healing. It was generally accepted. One classical scholar at Yale wrote a book claiming that the main methods used in evangelizing Rome were healing and casting out of evil spirits. Now Baptists, who are great on evangelization, don't know that. It's a historic question, not a question of theology. It went on for 300 years and didn't stop until Rome was converted. At that point, a number of influences contributed to the gradual demise of the supernatural in the Church. And by the time you got to Calvin the only healing going on was in Catholic shrines.

David: So Calvin wasn't starting something new with his cessationist doctrine, but was rather putting the final nail in the coffin.

Francis: That's true. It's kind of like Luther and indulgences - he saw the big shrines and churches in Europe filled with relics, and the dukes collecting big funds from the people to pay for it all. So he saw healing as Catholic superstition.

If you go back to England in 1640, the only person who was allowed to pray

for healing was the king. King Charles I of England and all the kings of England of that time held healing services. From the time of Edward the Confessor until the Calvinist kings came over from Holland in 1688, they had regular healing services several times a year. Henry VIII even held healing services. He'd spend the whole day, laying hands on people.

This divine right of kings demonstrated that you were anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power, which increased your political advantage. There was one disease (scrofula) that they believed kings could heal and it was called the "king's disease." It was a virulent form of tuberculosis. The kings of France would do the same thing, until the French monarchs began having their heads chopped off during the French Revolution.

David: In your research for this book, have you noticed any signs that consistently reappear when the Holy Spirit breaks out afresh?

Francis: Yes. Phenomena begin to appear, usually in out-of-the-way places. There are often a small number of pastors who have begun studying the scripture and wondering why the miraculous has ceased? Then something happens, and they're trapped into acknowledging a supernatural move of God. The one we like to talk about is Johann Christoph Blumhardt, who lived in the Black Forest of Germany around 1840. He was a Lutheran pastor in the state church. He was a good ol' guy, not out to cause trouble, and he began to wonder about this.

In his small village of about 550 people, one woman was demonically possessed, and as the one and only pastor, and not knowing what to do, he cries out, "God, help me!" The woman falls to the ground in a demonic manifestation, and over a period of two years of ministry, she is totally transformed, physically, emotionally, spiritually and mentally.

Everybody in the small village knows all about it, so they start coming to him. He never has a healing service and never preaches on it, tries to stay out of trouble, but when the church authorities hear about it, they tell him to stop, that it's not something a Lutheran pastor is supposed to do. The medical establishment declares that anyone with a physical problem should go to the doctors and that pastors were just supposed to counsel patients, not heal them.

David: Is it always opposition from the established church that quenches such outbreaks of the Spirit?

Francis: Sometimes there's a problem with things being taken to excess and other times there's a problem with false teaching. Someone may be spiritually gifted, but they may not be able to put it all together in a sound fashion - like the case in Milwaukee where the prayer team rolled a child up in a rug and unintentionally killed him while sitting on him. I'm sure the pastor involved in that is a good man, but the kid got killed. And then you get cases like Christoph Blumhardt's in Germany where the church steps in to try to close it

down. In his case, however, they finally sent him to a spa in the country so he could pray for the sick away from the church.

David: Have you ever thought that these outbreaks of the Holy Spirit must invariably be temporary because our tendency will always be to start seeking the gift rather than the giver?

Francis: Yeah, that's part of it. There is a book on the history of healers in this country written by a man named David Harrell called *All Things Are Possible*, which describes the lives of many who have been in the healing ministry. Like many do today, some of them tried to make money out of it. Some of them became alcoholic. Others ran off with the church secretary or whatever. All these human things take place and so many of them get discredited.

David: So the glory shifts from God to other things - to men - to superstar evangelists?

Francis: Yeah, and Jesus warns us about that. But if someone asks, "Are you a faith healer?" it carries a bad connotation. In truth, you'd have to say you are a faith healer, but then, so was Jesus.

David: So historically you see extraordinary outpourings of the Spirit that come and go, yet always there remains a potential flow of power that God may unleash at any moment.

Francis: It will go underground, and finally break forth, such as it did at Azusa Street in the early 20th century. It has broken out so much since then that it's not a little remnant fire anymore, where you can put firefighters around it and put it out. It's so big now, especially in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, that no one can put it out. The question is, "Is it in balance? Are all the things that need to go into it present, like real, deep, spiritual growth on the part of church leaders (who have a tendency to parade their spirituality in front of people for their own glory)?"

David: An image that comes to mind is the sun, where you have solar flares that erupt spectacularly, and then disappear, yet all the while you have the continuous burning of the solar energy behind it

Francis: That's a good one.

David: And so what we are seeing today is more like that continuous solar burning, but it's just getting hotter and hotter.

Francis: Yes, and I pray it continues so that everybody in the world will be touched somehow and understands what Christianity really is.

David: Theophostic ministry has arisen over the last several decades and a lot of people are very excited about it. Thousands have taken the training and become practitioners. Tell me, Judith, what is your knowledge of Theophostic

ministry? What have the people that you've met been saying about it?

Judith: As we travel around the world giving conferences, we have run into many people who have been blessed by Theophostic. Some of our prayer ministers here at [Christian Healing Ministries](#) have been through the Theophostic training and they incorporate it as part of their healing prayer here. I've watched the videos and I've read the books, and just as God raises up different ministries from time to time in different eras with different labels, I do believe it's a wonderful ministry of God. I've seen tremendous fruit in people's lives. I know several therapists who have incorporated it into their practice, and they are seeing healings that they never had before.

After studying it, I gave a teaching on it to our prayer ministers here at [Christian Healing Ministries](#). I had several different impressions of it. The man who developed it, Ed Smith, seems to be a wonderful man of God with a great heart for people, and my experience of listening to his testimony was that he was a counselor and he didn't see people being made whole or set free, and that God gave him this, and then he saw tremendous healings afterwards. So that's the background of it - it just came out of desperation - a counselor wanting to help his clients.

What I've appreciated is that Theophostic provides a technique to people who aren't comfortable listening for what God is directing in their prayer, such as we do here in inner healing prayer. We tell our prayer ministers, you listen to the person, you listen to God, you love the person, and you pray for the person. You don't give advice, you don't give counsel because you are not a trained counselor, you're a prayer minister. What we have is a more feminine approach to healing, as those who sit before God and listen. The feminine is always the listener.

David: That reminds me of C.S. Lewis' thought that we are all feminine in comparison to God.

Judith: That's right. That's a good quote. Theophostic is a very masculine approach to healing. You listen to the person and you look for the lie, but you have this very neat little technique that will take you to the lie and take you to the healing. So in my experience people who aren't comfortable with the "feminine" side will be more comfortable with Theophostic. It's interesting because a lot of the people who have approached me who really appreciate it are male therapists and male prayer ministers. Some people are very uncomfortable trying to listen for how God is going to ask them to guide their prayer.

What I've told our prayer ministers and others that have asked me is Theophostic is one tool in a toolbox of healing. You may be more comfortable with that tool than you would be with another tool, or you may want to use that to get to the lie, but then beyond the lie, there is a need for healing and restoration.

Now the other part of the issue is that not all people that need healing have a core lie to go to. They were just simply incest victims or were abused, or neglected or whatever. Now they may have a perception of themselves that is a lie as a result, but there's also a deep wound there that needs to be healed in addition to the lie. So I see it as working in combination with inner healing prayer, with generational healing, with deliverance, and all of that. My understanding at this point is that it's one tool among many.

David: In one sense, Theophostic is not really new. It's a new packaging of something we've always done in counseling, in terms of trying to find out the lies that we believe about ourselves in the aftermath of trauma or neglect.

Judith: Certainly. Barbara Shlemon Ryan who is a wonderful Catholic laywoman in the healing ministry that works with us occasionally and worked with Agnes Sanford and others, is very deep in the Lord. She has been with the Lord many years. She heard this presented at an Association of Christian Therapist's meeting, and she said later it's just inner healing in another package. You know, it just has a different title, it's what we've been doing for years and years and years. The good thing about Theophostic is where inner healing has not been accepted in evangelical churches, Theophostic is. So, in my mind, it's God coming another way, making an end run, as Francis sometimes says, trying to get into all the different churches. And because Ed Smith is a Baptist, I think it's more acceptable in evangelical circles. So all you do is say thank God that he has given us another approach to healing and bless it and use it.

David: As you say, it's merely one of the elements that needs to be addressed in any given person's healing. So Theophostic in and of itself would not be enough, you would need to have a fuller healing process.

Judith: God created us as such complex beings. Our memories sometimes don't need to be healed, but others are very distorted, and that's where the lies come in. Some memories are very accurate and there is no lie involved in it. What happened, actually happened, and it deeply affected the person. If you look back in life, most of our sins and most of our wounds are generationally based - they started somewhere in the generations - so we need generational healing. Some of the deep wounds have a demonic element attached to them, and so we need deliverance. So we're so complex, and that's why God gave us so many different avenues of healing. We also need reality therapy. We need reconstruction work. There are all kinds of things. So I'd hate for somebody to think because they went through one method of healing that they're totally fine because God will revisit them and make them go through the rest of their healing process.

End of Interview

Celebrating the Life of Dr. Francis MacNutt

(from the [Christian Healing Ministries](#) website)

The Reverend Dr. Francis Scott MacNutt, a beloved leader in the worldwide Catholic Charismatic Renewal and an ecumenical leader in healing prayer ministry, died January 12, 2020 after a short illness. Francis was born in St. Louis, Missouri on April 22nd, 1925 to portrait painter J. Scott MacNutt and ballerina Agnes Cady MacNutt. He was predeceased by his younger sister Alex Usher (Rich).

Francis inherited his parents' creative talent and sharp intellect and went on to study at Harvard University. His education was interrupted by World War II, during which Francis joined the Army Medical Corps. and was stationed at Fort Crowder, Missouri for two years. After his service he returned to Harvard and completed a degree in English, graduated with honors, and then studied for a master's degree in Speech and Drama at Catholic University of America in Washington D. C. During his time at Catholic University, he found inspiration in Thomas Merton's *Seven Storey Mountain* and felt a call from God to the priesthood.

He was ordained a Dominican priest in 1956 and completed his Ph.D. in theology from Aquinas Institute of Theology, where he excelled as a professor of preaching. With an extensive background in Speech and Drama and gifts in preaching and communication, he was elected President of the national Catholic Homiletics Society and founded the journal, *Preaching*, in 1965. He also authored the book, *Evaluating Preaching Effectiveness*, and held seminars on preaching throughout the United States.

In 1967 Francis' life took a dramatic and unexpected turn when he experienced the Baptism of the Holy Spirit at a Camp Farthest Out conference. That conference became the watershed event of his life. There he met Agnes Sanford, a pioneer in the healing prayer and pastoral care movement, who became his mentor, and also Rev. Tommy Tyson, a Methodist minister and leader in the Charismatic movement, who became his lifelong friend. Tommy traveled with Francis and his ministry team throughout the world on healing missions. Francis founded Merton House in St. Louis, a non-profit ministry that focused on Life in the Holy Spirit and Healing prayer, as well as living with and among the poor.

Francis possessed a unique ability to lovingly bridge the gap between Christian groups, and his gifts of compassion and healing made him a beloved speaker in both Catholic and Protestant circles. With a team of teachers that included both men and women, he traveled worldwide with a message of

God's love through healing prayer and life in the Holy Spirit. Francis was a featured speaker at all major conferences of the Charismatic Renewal. In 1974 he wrote *Healing*, a book used throughout the world by churches, seminaries and lay people. It has become a classic text on all aspects of the ministry of healing prayer. He went on to write seven more vital books dealing with the history, theology and scriptural foundations of healing.

In 1975, while speaking at the World Conference on the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem, Francis met Judith Sewell, a psychotherapist and missionary who was leading a local house of prayer. They crossed paths several times over the next few years and formed a strong friendship. Realizing that their friendship had become a significant source of life and love for them both, they sought the will of the Lord in prayer and counsel. In 1980, they married.

Francis and Judith's complimentary gifts and passion for the healing ministry made them a very effective husband and wife team in life and in ministry. They founded Christian Healing Ministries in 1980 and, at the invitation of Bishop Frank Cerveney of the Episcopal Diocese and his wife Emmy, relocated to Jacksonville Florida in 1987. Christian Healing Ministries has been an international center for ministry and training for 40 years, holding great influence among clergy and lay people of all denominations. In the mid-2000s, about 500 Catholic charismatic priests and lay leaders from the worldwide Catholic Charismatic Renewal (50 countries) journeyed to Jacksonville to learn from Francis and Judith in the Schools of Healing Prayer. Christian Healing Ministries has educated and trained thousands as prayer ministers through their ongoing School of Healing Prayer.

Francis adored his wife Judith and delighted in being a father to his beloved children, Rachel and David, to whom he imparted wisdom, encouragement and faith. Together as a family, they grew in the shelter of one another, always loving with His love and forgiving with His grace. During his final weeks, Francis was comforted by the surrounding love and prayers of his family and devoted friends.

Francis was a pioneer in his field. He dedicated his life to restoring the legacy of healing to the Church. His extraordinary wisdom and deep compassion for all who are suffering will be greatly missed.

**Find Out More About Christian Healing Ministries and to Order
The Books of Francis & Judith**

<https://www.christianhealingmin.org/>

Watch or Listen to an Additional Interview with Francis MacNutt

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?
v=HOAn_Z7a3Eg&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HOAn_Z7a3Eg&feature=youtu.be)

<https://www.charismapodcastnetwork.com/show/purepassion/>

Francis' Books

Can Homosexuality Be Healed?

Deliverance from Evil Spirits: A Practical Manual

Healing: Revised and Expanded

Overcome by the Spirit

The Healing Reawakening: Reclaiming Our Lost Inheritance

The Practice of Healing Prayer: A How-to Guide for Catholics

The Prayer That Heals: Praying for Healing in the Family

Judith's Books

*Encountering Angels: True Stories of How They Touch Our Lives
Every Day*

Angels Are for Real: Inspiring True Stories and Biblical Answers

About the Author

Dr. David Kyle Foster is the founder/director of Mastering Life Ministries and author of [Transformed Into His Image](#) and [Love Hunger](#), and is the founder/director of [Mastering Life Ministries](#). Read more of his take on sexual sin and brokenness in his newest book, [The Sexual Healing Reference Edition](#) and listen to his twice-weekly podcast at: charismapodcastnetwork.com/show/purepassion.

Ministry Links

**Watch More Videos and Read More Free Articles and E-Books
from Mastering Life Ministries**

<https://www.masteringlife.org/resources/the-divine-marriage>

Listen to Our Twice-Weekly “Pure Passion” Podcast

<https://www.charismapodcastnetwork.com/show/purepassion>

Sign Up for Our Free E-Newsletter

<https://www.masteringlife.org/>

Watch Over 800+ of Our Videos

<https://www.youtube.com/user/davidkylefoster>

Access More of Our Resources

www.MasteringLife.org

<https://www.facebook.com/purepassiontv>

<https://www.twitter.com/purepassiontv>

<https://www.cross.tv/profile/175377?go=channels>

Additional Ministry Links

**“TranZformed: Finding Peace with Your God-Given Gender”
documentary website**

www.TranZformed.org

**“How Do You Like Me Now? When a Child, Parent, Spouse or
Sibling Says They’re Gay” documentary website**

<https://www.howdoyoulikemenow.org/>

“Such Were Some of You” documentary website

www.SuchWereSomeOfYou.org

iPhone/iPad “Pure Passion” App

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/pure-passion/id351902634>

“Pure Passion” Android App

[https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.subsplash.thechurchapp.purepassion&hl=en_US)

[id = com.subsplash.thechurchapp.purepassion&hl = en_US](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.subsplash.thechurchapp.purepassion&hl=en_US)

AmazonFire TV Channel App

<https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00S6SSGNQ>

Apple TV Channel App

<https://www.lightcast.com/apps/featured-appletv/554/pure-passion/>

Google TV Channel App

[https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.lightcast.android.tv.purepassion)

[id = com.lightcast.android.tv.purepassion](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.lightcast.android.tv.purepassion)

Roku Channel (U.S./Canada/Europe)

<https://channelstore.roku.com/details/20191/pure-passion>

<https://channelstore.roku.com/details/24566/pure-passion-world>

Chinese Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/purepassionchinese>

Spanish Website

<https://pasionpura.com/>

Spanish Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/pasionpuratv>

**Spanish Video-on-Demand for “Such Were Some of You”
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<https://youtu.be/bM8iv4ugrnM>

**Spanish Video-on-Demand for “How Do You Like Me Now?”
documentary**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?
v = X5xjYdTNGAs&feature =youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X5xjYdTNGAs&feature=youtu.be)

Spanish Video-on-Demand for “TranZformed” documentary

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?
v = Jk8M9ZckG1A&feature =youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jk8M9ZckG1A&feature=youtu.be)

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“His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness.”

(2 Peter 1:3)